

0174-21 Level 2 Technical Certificate in Forestry and Arboriculture

2025

Qualification Report

Contents

Introduction	3
Qualification Grade Distribution.....	4
Theory Exam.....	5
Grade Boundaries.....	5
Grade Boundaries table	7
Chief Examiner Commentary.....	8
Synoptic Assignment.....	9
Grade Boundaries.....	9
Principal Moderator Commentary.....	10

Introduction

This document has been prepared by the Chief Examiner and Principal Moderator; it is designed to be used as a feedback tool for centres in order to enhance teaching and preparation for assessment. It is advised that this document is referred to when planning delivery and when preparing candidates for City & Guilds Technical assessments.

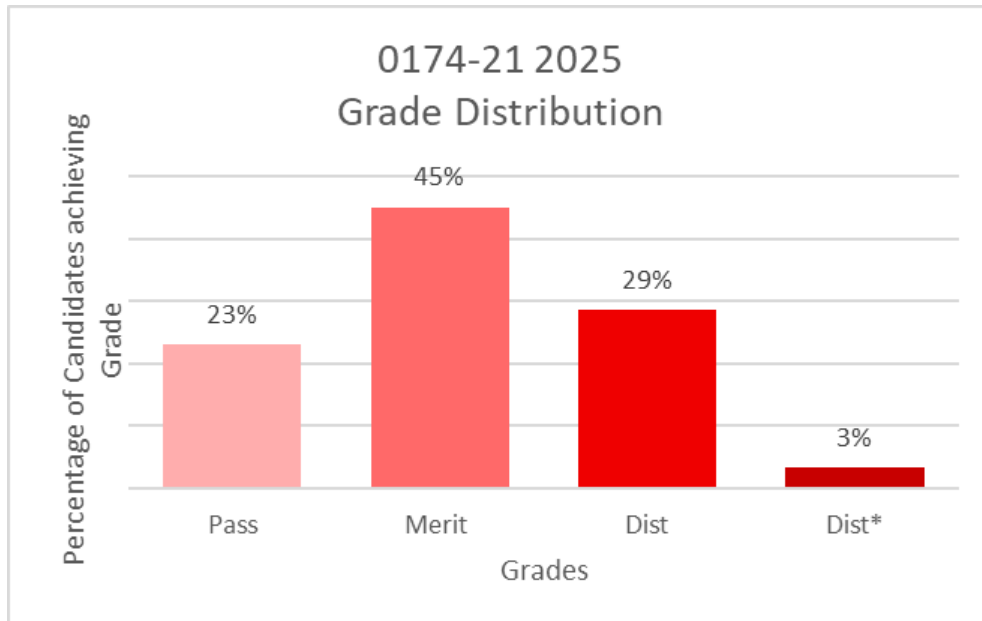
This report provides general commentary on candidate performance in both the synoptic assignment and theory exam. It highlights common themes in relation to the technical aspects explored within the assessment, giving areas of strengths and weakness demonstrated by the cohort of candidates who sat assessments in the 2025 academic year. It will explain aspects which caused difficulty and potentially why the difficulties arose.

The document provides commentary on the following assessments:

- 0174-523 Level 2 Forestry and Arboriculture – Theory exam
 - March 2025 (Spring)
 - June 2025 (Summer)
- 0174-022 Level 2 Forestry and Arboriculture – Synoptic Assignment

Qualification Grade Distribution

The approximate grade distribution for this qualification is shown below:



Please note City & Guilds will only report qualification grades for candidates who have achieved all of the required assessment components, including Employer Involvement, optional units and any other centre assessed components as indicated within the Qualification Handbook. The grade distribution shown above could include performance from previous years.

Theory Exam

Grade Boundaries

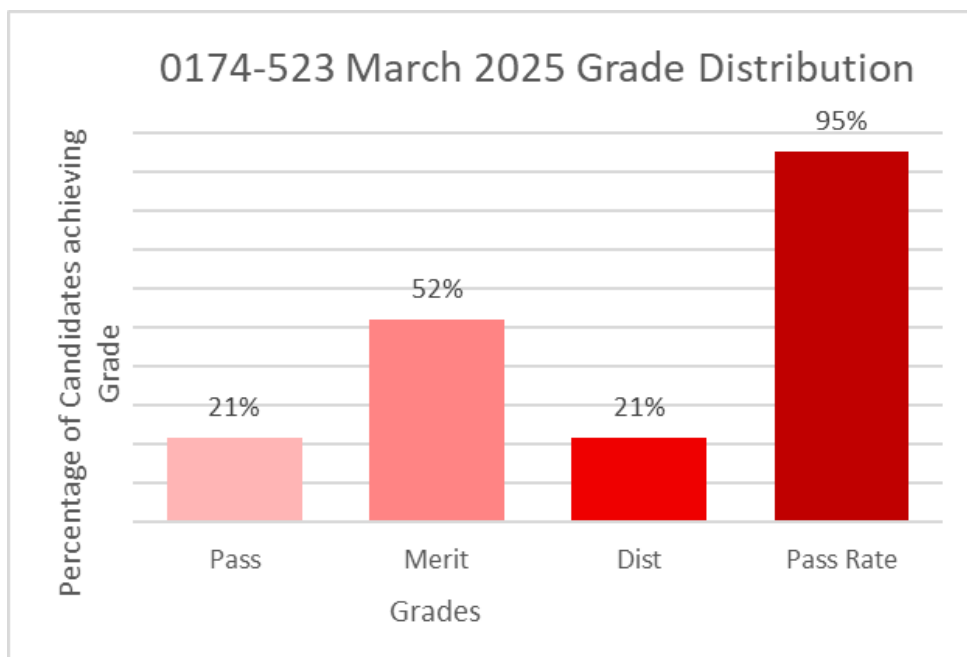
Assessment: **0174-523**

Series: **March 2025 (Spring)**

Below identifies the final grade boundaries for this assessment, as agreed by the awarding panel:

Total marks available	40
Pass mark	18
Merit mark	23
Distinction mark	29

The graph below shows the approximate distribution of grades and pass rates for this assessment:



General Comments on Candidate Performance

0174-523 Level 2 Forestry and Arboriculture - Theory exam

Series March 2025 (Spring)

Areas of weakness in the March 25 paper were identified to be in specific areas. Questions on the resilience of tree stock, control measures for common fungi species and bacterial species were answered less well by most candidates. Areas within tree establishment on aftercare, nursery stock specifications and some aspects of planting proved more difficult for some candidates. There were also some weaknesses in knowledge of certain sectors of the industry, cover letter formats and in specific knowledge of tree and shrub species. The item analysis also showed that the breadth of response from candidates was greater in the scenario-based A04 questions indicating less certainty in their knowledge.

Areas of strength were encouragingly found in each unit and included knowledge of tree protection legislation, basic principles of science, some aspects of weed and pest control, and some detailed knowledge of job roles.

In terms of future improvements, the use of practice papers, glossaries for scientific terms, case studies in methods of maintaining resilient tree stocks and control of pests and diseases would all be beneficial to the candidates.

Centres are encouraged to support to candidates in developing exam technique.

<https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-apprenticeships/land-basedservices/horticulture/0174-technical-in-horticulture-and-forestry-arboriculture#tab=document>

Grade Boundaries table

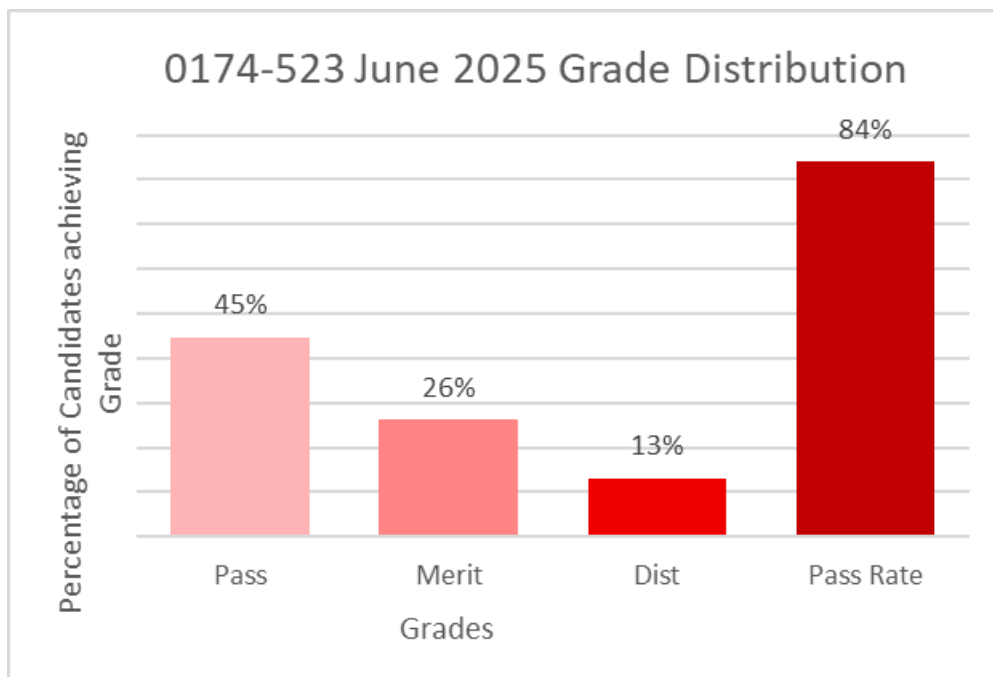
Assessment: **0174-523**

Series: **June 2025 (Summer)**

Below identifies the final grade boundaries for this assessment.

Total marks available	40
Pass mark	17
Merit mark	23
Distinction mark	29

The graph below shows the approximate distributions of grades and pass rate for this assessment using the above boundary marks:



Chief Examiner Commentary

0174-523 Level 2 Forestry and Arboriculture - Theory exam

Series 2 June 2025 (Summer)

This paper was similar in content, range and degree of challenge to previous versions.

The mean mark of **22.27** was also very similar to the previous equivalent version (Summer 2024) which was **22.46**.

An overview of the paper showed the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates:

- Unit 202 (Forestry and Arboriculture Sector) questions, apart from one on a definition of arboriculture, were answered well. Strengths were observed in questions on career development opportunities
- Unit 203 (Environment and Conservation) basic habitat management recall questions were generally answered well, but in a scenario-based setting the more applied questions were answered more poorly indicating a lack of depth of knowledge in this area.
- Unit 205 (Introduction to Plant Science) basic science questions were answered well at A01, apart from a lack of knowledge about the role of phloem, but control measures for pests, disease and fungi were a weaker area. Interestingly the image questions (despite being very clear) were not answered particularly strongly.
- Unit 206 (Tree Establishment) proved most problematic of the units to the candidates both at A01 and A02, with knowledge of terms and techniques evidently lacking in many learners. Nursery Stock specifications (clearly on spec) proved difficult, and the more applied questions resulted in a variable range of responses
- Two of the scenario-based questions were answered generally well, but the more involved Scenario 1 proved difficult for some candidates largely due to a failure to identify key terms.

A common theme throughout the paper was issues with understanding terminology e.g. topography, riparian, saprophytic, polymers which were all poorly understood despite being featured within the specification.

A suggestion to centres may be to compile a classroom poster or form of reference for key words and definitions for candidates. Pest and disease knowledge can again be reinforced by the very visual material available from APHA and many tree nurseries have catalogues which detail the availability and descriptions of stock types which would be useful to reinforce the required knowledge.

Synoptic Assignment

Grade Boundaries

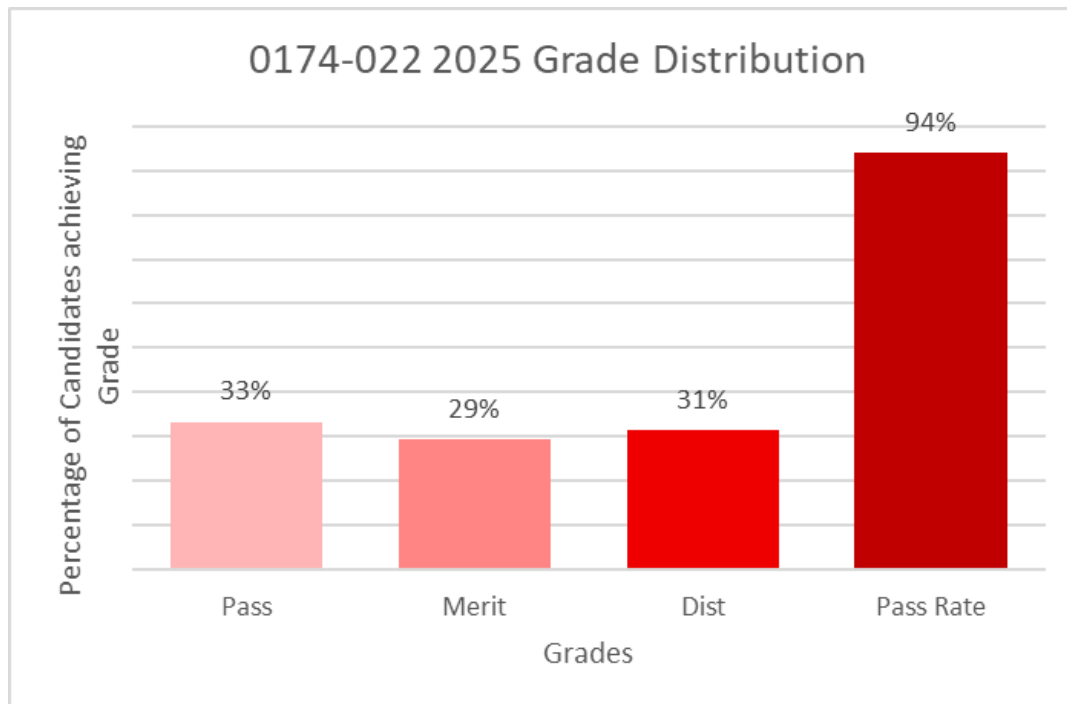
Below identifies the final grade boundaries for this assessment, as agreed by the awarding panel:

Assessment: **0174-022**

Series: **2025**

Total marks available	60
Pass mark	24
Merit mark	32
Distinction mark	40

The graph below shows the approximate distributions of grades and pass rate for this assessment:



Principal Moderator Commentary

Comments on Centre Administration.

Administration for all Centres was generally good, in particular regarding the prompt uploading of evidence and supporting documentation, although Moderators stated missing evidence was noted.

Overall performance of candidates compared to expectations.

The synoptic assignment for 2025 was comparable to that set for the previous year, with candidates continuing to demonstrate a higher understanding of key concepts and theories based on practical tasks. However, it was noticeable that candidates who scored lower struggled with demonstrating knowledge and understanding. This was particularly noted where tasks required an interpretation of existing features within a woodland. The correct use of plant nomenclature conventions scored particularly lowly.

Provision of evidence for Moderation.

Centres must ensure that the map produced is the candidates own work, and not simply downloaded from the internet, or provided by the Centre. Candidates are not marked on their artistic skills; the sketch map however must be clear enough to show key features. The quality of Risk Assessments was varied, with the risk level and control measures either not being accurate in most cases or not fully completed. However, areas of strength were centred around practical activities, in particular regarding Task 2b. Annotation of photographic evidence saw a general improvement in quality, however some examples were uploaded which did not support the evidence, and indeed contradicted the comments within the POF and CRF.

A general improvement in the quality of upload, with the majority of Centres following the correct protocols with the use of Practical Observation Forms (POF's) and Candidate Result Forms (CRF's).

However, as a general reminder to Centres, the POF must not include grades and should only record observation notes from the practical assessment, which must not be recorded on a CRF.

The CRF should be completed using the notes from all practical observation notes.

It is also imperative that the candidates ULN number is used on all assessment records, not the Centres registration number. Similarly, the full Centre number must also be used, including the first zero.

Grade boundaries are similar to 2024, which has seen a slight improvement in achievement rates, this being a positive development.

General overview of assessor alignment.

Alignment between the marker and moderator in the majority of cases, was within tolerance with the exception of AO4 and AO5 where links across tasks and attention to detail was not consistent with some examples.

Performance against Assessment Outcomes (AO's)

AO1 Recall of knowledge related to the qualification LOs

A good level of evidence was provided across all tasks, with the majority of evidence being detailed and linked to the practical skills.

Comments on PO Forms were on the whole, accurate.

AO2 Understanding of concepts and theories relating to the LOs

The candidates ability to apply concepts and theories was embedded within Task 1, enabling causal links between theory and practice to be evidenced.

Justifications and the consideration of relevant alternatives was poor with candidates in lower bands, however basic links and understanding was evident.

Candidates within the higher bands demonstrated a higher level of understanding of key concepts and theories and their application practically.

AO3 Application of practical/technical skills

Practical ability and performance was clearly outlined, confirming the candidates competency in a range of technical skills.

Accurate marking was carried out, especially with the recording of a candidates industry speed. Where it was recorded that a candidate was not yet at an industry speed, the correlation between practical sessions and previous experience was noted.

Safety considerations of a candidate were not always adequately recorded.

Photographic evidence had improved, especially where detailed annotation had been carried out.

AO4 Bringing it all together – coherence of the whole subject.

The range of candidate ability in knowledge and understanding had been provided, with marker feedback confirming causal links had been observed. However, this was not been consistently accurate across all evidence sampled by Moderators.

AO5 Attending to detail/perfecting.

As with previous years, attention to detail and perfecting the evidence was achieved by candidates within higher bands, however those in lower bands struggled to achieve an acceptable level of attending to detail. Whilst comments were accurate within the POF's, this was not consistently considered within the CRF's.